



PROGRAMS OF THE GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY HEALTH,  
DIVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH

## A SNAPSHOT OF



# GEORGIA PUBLIC HEALTH LABORATORY

### **Mission:**

The mission of the Georgia Department of Community Health (DCH), Division of Public Health (DPH) Laboratory Program is to improve the health status of Georgians by providing accurate, timely and confidential clinical and non-clinical laboratory testing in support of Division of Public Health programs, activities and initiatives as well as performing tests for Emergency Preparedness.

### **Background:**

The Georgia Public Health Laboratory (GPHL) was established in 1905 by an act of the State Legislature. At that time the Department of Health was comprised of the Laboratory and Administration. The first Health Laboratory was located in the basement of the Capitol Building in space formerly used as a stable. The GPHL moved into the Health building on Trinity Avenue (Atlanta) in the mid-1950s and the Regional Laboratories were added to improve service delivery throughout the State. In the mid-1990s, due to expansion of the type of testing being performed and the need for more safe and secure laboratory facilities, GPHL received funding to design and build a new Central Facility. A new Waycross Public Health Laboratory was funded and built in 2006.

### **Overview:**

The GPHL has come a long way since 1905! The Georgia Public Health Laboratory consists of laboratory facilities in three locations. They include:

- Central Laboratory Facility in Decatur, Georgia (opened in December 1997)
- Albany Regional Laboratory
- Waycross Public Health Laboratory (opened in August 2007)

The GPHL is arranged in five broad areas of testing and support. They include:

- Chemistry (Newborn Screening Unit, Lead Screening and Fluoride Testing)
- Emergency Preparedness (Biological/Chemical Terrorism and Molecular Biology Units)
- Facilities Support
- Microbiology (Bacteriology, Microbial Immunology, Mycology/ Mycobacteriology, Parasitology and Virology Units)
- Operations (Accessioning, Data Entry, Reports & Records, Billing, Budget, Personnel and Purchasing)

GPHL has 150 positions in areas of Administrative, Technical, Clerical and Support responsibility. All three GPHL facilities comply with both State and Federal (CLIA'88) Clinical Laboratory Licensure requirements.

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### Accomplishments:

In FY2009 (July 1, 2008 through June 30, 2009) the GPHL received 700,490 specimens for testing. A total of 8,514,483 tests/examinations/determinations were performed on the specimens that were received. Additionally, 304,041 tests were performed for Quality Control (QC).

The GPHL works closely with DPH programs such as Epidemiology and Infectious Diseases to help identify, respond to and investigate disease outbreaks. GPHL also interacts with Public Health Laboratory partners at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), clinical laboratories through out the State, County Health Departments, hospitals/health care providers, professional organizations and with Emergency Preparedness Laboratories to assure that our mission is met.